

FAIRWAY LIVING

Hybrid working is encouraging more buyers to dream of a golf-friendly property in the sun, reports Peter Swain



The oceanfront links of Cabot Saint Lucia

Nowhere is benefiting more from a post-pandemic work-life reset than long-haul destinations in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean, which let executive nomads spend more time with their families in sunnier climes.

Take Heritage Villas Valriche (villasvalriche.com) overlooking the Indian Ocean on the southwest coast

of Mauritius, which is adding a second championship course to its existing 27 holes. Avid golfers know the island already has a number of great tracks, but Louis Oosthuizen's new La Réserve Links, due to open in December, is eagerly anticipated.

The last 30 of 288 properties built to date are now being launched, some with a traditional design

Heritage Villas
Valriche's three-
bedroom Villa
Clear; below: the
bright living area
of the six-bedroom
Falcon Villa at
Limassol Greens



but others in a bold new contemporary configuration. The destination already features two five-star hotels, first-class restaurants and a private beach club; it's also part of the Integrated Resort Scheme, which grants owners residency rights for themselves and their families.

Over in the Caribbean, Apes Hill (apeshill.com) on Barbados is a prime beneficiary of this new long-haul trend. The new-look 18-hole course and clubhouse are opening this summer (see page 63), and sales at this scenic 475-acre project have been brisk, with 35 or so three- and four-bedroom villas sold and just about completed, of which 23 will be available to rent later this year. With a contemporary rather than colonial feel, these rental villas will give prospective buyers, mostly British or Canadian so far, a good opportunity to get the feel of an outward-looking, family-friendly set-up that's welcoming to allcomers but particularly to younger members.

Their own 77-acre farm to grow fresh food, water self-sufficiency, 12 kilometres of hiking trails, new tennis and padel courts plus a spa and wellness centre speak to Apes Hill's forward-looking environmental and active lifestyle agenda.

Of the 325 lots envisioned, the "King of the Castle" ones are at Walters Sweep, an elevated site suitable for 10,000sq ft villas with the course below and sea views above. Within the usual design guidelines, owners have substantial freedom to create their own Caribbean dream house; homeowner fees are modest, 24-hour-patrolled security tight, and a beach club in nearby Holetown on the radar. The new kid on the Bajan block, Apes Hill is definitely on a roll.

The legendary Sandy Lane, a couple of miles away, is an altogether more private, old-school proposition. Realtor Chris Parra of One Caribbean Estates (onecaribbeanestates.com) has a range of homes here – of which the sublime Olivewood is the best. Built in 2004, the six-bedroom residence is a classic Barbadian plantation house with wraparound verandas, complemented by interconnected



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pavilions, garden courtyards and pools, all of which would look at home in the Hollywood Hills.

At nearby Royal Westmoreland, Parra is also selling Seaduced, a much more contemporary affair. Overlooking the 16th fairway, the entrance to the 6,400sq ft five-bedroom house is a wooden bridge over moving water, leading to a generous inside-outside living space with all the automated bells and whistles. Barbados's 12-Month Welcome Stamp visa, introduced during Covid, is encouraging more buyers to see the island as a long-term destination, with Parra a good first point of contact for those looking seriously at Bajan living.

Elsewhere in the region, the grand opening of Cabot Saint Lucia's spectacular new Coore & Crenshaw-designed Point Hardy club is scheduled for December (cabotsaintlucia.com). The launch of the 6,616-yard clifftop course is just what the real-estate team need to move sales into overdrive at a site that is primed to rival the existing Cabot Cape Breton in Canada.

At the Barbuda Ocean Club, meanwhile, Tom Fazio's latest masterpiece is also due to open this winter. Most buyers here so far are American, but the generous oceanfront lots, high standard of amenities on land and water, nearby Nobu and new airport give this development genuine international appeal – transforming it, like the sites on Barbados and Mauritius, from a place where owners once might have stayed for a few weeks into one where they can actually live.

In Europe, the Golden Triangle of the Central Algarve continues to be the market leader for golf developments, with prices appreciating 15 per cent in 2022, according to local

experts Knight Frank. The realtor also suggests that Quinta do Lago (quintadolago.com), 15 minutes from Faro airport, still commands the highest price in the region, averaging about €14,000 per square metre.

The award-winning South Course at QdL has recently had a €7 million upgrade, confirming it as one of Europe's best layouts. With two other courses, a Paul McGinley Academy, TaylorMade Performance Centre and 14 first-class bars and restaurants, the 2,000-acre resort, established in 1972, is an oasis of stylish calm.

Curving along the North Course with views over the Ria Formosa Natural Park and the Mediterranean, One Green Way Residences features 89 luxury serviced state-of-the-art homes, comprising 62 apartments and 27 villas, ranging in size from three to six bedrooms, all with floor-to-ceiling windows and large terraces. The demographic of property buyers is changing from those wanting simply a holiday home to younger families seeking a permanent residence.

Close by, QdL's Wyndham Grand is better suited to buyers looking for more of an investment-style product, with owners getting rental income plus 12 weeks of usage a year.

Sotogrande (sotogrande.com), 16 kilometres up the coast from Gibraltar, is another well-established destination with a variety of great courses, including Valderrama, nearby. The resort is launching two luxurious five-bedroom Sky Villa penthouses atop its six-hectare Village Verde development overlooking the La Reserva course, coastline and Andalusian hills. Owners of these and the other 121 apartments in the car-free gated community will have



The patio of Seaduced, Royal Westmoreland's striking five-bedroom villa; below: Sandy Lane's stately Olivewood villa

access to a variety of pools, as well as gardens, play areas, a croquet lawn and jogging trails. All that plus the marina, shopping and fine dining make Sotogrande a firm favourite for many hankering after a fairway-side home in Spain.

Elsewhere in Europe, and with a two-year time horizon, two new Jack Nicklaus Signature courses are being crafted: one at Monte Rei (monte-rei.com) in the eastern Algarve, the other at Kilada (mykilada.com) in the Peloponnese. The former is still selling Clubhouse Residences next to the sublime North Course, while the latter has a variety of sumptuous lots available in a locale known as the Hamptons of Greece.

Keeping the Greek connection, on the Cypriot south coast, construction on the brand-new Limassol Greens course (limassolgreens.com) began in January with €55m in advance real-estate sales currently confirmed. The 6,404m Cabell Robinson 18-holer will be the island's first in a semi-urban setting, with the casino, Limassol Marina and city centre all within a ten-minute drive.

Close to Lady's Mile Beach, work on the Robin West Apartments began in February with completion scheduled for winter 2024/5. Modestly priced two-bedroom homes, two- and three-bedroom townhouses and three- to six-bedroom villas are all proving attractive to buyers from

Russia, the Middle East and Germany as well as the UK. Most owners will be eligible for the Cyprus Residency Programme.

Another sunny island resort within easy flight time of many mainland hubs, Abama on Tenerife (abamahotelresort.com) continues to attract buyers from across Europe. 2023 sees the opening of La Plaza, a €14 million social hub for residents and hotel guests offering shopping, dining, an infinity pool, fitness and relaxation areas. The new Tagara restaurant and club also serve as the lounge for Los Jardines and Las Villas del Tennis owners – tennis superstar Carlos Alcaraz dropped in recently to help inaugurate the set-up and publicise the resort's fine tennis facilities.

Spacious, fully furnished, two-bedroom Los Jardines apartments have generous 49sq m terraces with views over the Dave Thomas course to neighbouring La Gomera island. Many buyers take advantage of the resort's rental, management and maintenance programmes to produce some income in their absence.

In uncertain times, luxe golf developments are increasingly seen as well-ordered, secure, sporting sanctuaries where owners and their families can play, rest and even work. You might say, in fact, a hole in one.



The generous terrace and gym of a Sky Villa in Sotogrande's Village Verde

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